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ABSTRACT

An expansionist/reductionist model is proposed, in which the naturalistic inquirer uses qualitative methods for evaluating social studies and proposing suggestions for improvement. Qualitative research is seen as a means of presenting a sensitive picture of the world view of the population studied that cannot be obtained by other research strategies. Thus, research in social studies education that focuses on identification of the world view of classroom teachers, students, and administrators can provide a possible framework for planned research and decisions about social studies curriculum, teaching strategies, curriculum development and inservice approaches, teacher and student needs in the classroom, and perceptions of what the goals of social studies should be. While this "emic" approach in qualitative research is seen as the best method for studying both the process of change in education and the changing needs of various participants, and also for identifying pressing problems, it can present problems because it attempts to consider as many variables as possible to explain the phenomenon being studied. Because reduction and analysis of such data are viewed as the most important steps in qualitative research, suggestions for data reduction, event analysis, and communication with the audience are given. Examples of ethnographic research in education and some recent controversies in such research are also given. (LH)

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# THE PLAGUE OF ANALYZING QUALITATIVE DATA

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Life is multiple, but it is also one. Education is multiple, but it is also one. Education can be conceived only in n dimensions; it is not unidimensional. Therefore, educational research, if it is to give real insight into improved pedagogical practice, can be conducted only by assessing the interaction of multiple dimensions within which individual actors affect events. Qualitative or naturalistic approaches to educational research provide methods for accessing and evaluating divergent points of view and approaches within a single setting.

Naturalistic inquiry, having its roots in ethnography, provides an alternative to the experimental/statistical approach to educational research. Many researchers shy away from naturalistic inquiry because they assume it is unstructured, undisciplined, and unsystematic. There is no statement of hypotheses prior to data collection in many cases and it is certainly no pretest-posttest control group design with random selection of subjects where all extraneous variables can be controlled. Carefully planned and conducted naturalistic inquiry is as rigorous as traditional research approaches. It is simply different in that there is a different philosophical base, inquiry paradigm, purpose, stance, framework and design.

Naturalistic inquiry differs from other modes of inquiry in the degree of manipulation of conditions prior to the inquiry and the degree of constraint imposed on outputs by subjects involved. Rather than controlling variables, there is an attempt to consider as many variables as possible to explain

the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, the researcher as research instrument is quite careful not to affect the situation or interaction among individuals in the setting prior to, during, or subsequent to data collection.

Naturalistic inquiry is phenomenological rather than positivistic. Rather than seeking to identify causes of educational phenomena, the purpose is to understand human behavior and interactions from the actors' own frame of reference. The focus of research is to understand actualities, social realities, and human perceptions of reality that exist without the obtrusiveness of formal measurement, preconceived questions, or a prestructured matrix for findings. The attempt is to present "slice-of-life" episodes or events documented through natural language and representing as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, how they know it, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions, and understandings are.

The naturalistic inquirer takes essentially an expansionist stance in that he/she seeks a holistic view of social context which reflects the complexity of the situation and reveals all of the layers of the "reality" being studied. It is a multiple reality in that reality is in the minds of each participant observed and the representation of reality depends heavily on each separate perception. Reality is constantly changing in the same setting over time, people, events, and circumstances. The reality which is observed by the researcher is also affected by the perceptions and experiences he/she brings into

the study. Thus, a description of researcher background and possible bias is essential to accurate reader evaluation of procedures, data collected, categories generated, structures for analysis, and results in a research report.

Reality, like an onion, has many layers which make up the whole. In educational research, the effect of all "layers" of persons, organizational positions, perspectives, policies, etc. must be explored to determine what is actually occurring in a situation so that subsequent suggestions for change or continuation of ongoing practices will be relevant.

Unlike the process in experimental studies where the design and research instrument is carefully planned prior to conducting the research, with naturalistic inquiry, the design, research questions, and categories for analysis emerge as the investigation proceeds. The researcher becomes a member of the social interaction rather than assuming the role of manager. The major task is to observe all and select aspects determined critical for the purposes of the investigation. If a focus is not proposed initially, observation reveals the events which are worthy of serious study. An expansionist/reductionist model has been proposed in which the naturalistic inquirer begins with discovery with no prior concepts or categories for investigation, moves to a verification mode, then back and forth through these two modes throughout the investigation.

All of these defining characteristics of qualitative/naturalistic research lead to some important considerations in analysis of data which are generated. First, from what

perspective are the data represented? Second, how are masses of data generated by observation and interview reduced to understandable categories and synthesized to formulate reasonable conclusions and recommendations? Third, how can the researcher get a single focus on data from multiple data sources and multiple methods of collection?

World View

One of the most important aspects of qualitative research is that of defining the events from the world view of the group of people being observed. This approach is best exemplified in anthropology in the works of British social anthropologists E.E. Evans-Pritchard in The Nuer and Nuer Religion and in Marcel Griaule's The Dogon and Conversations with Ogotemmeli. After reading these, the reader goes away with an understanding of "what it is like to be" a Nuer or a Dogon and why they put their world together the way they do.

Some studies in education have approached revealing the world view of participants in this way. Those which have done this use the approach of role studies primarily. Some examples are Wolcott's The Man in the Principal's Office, Sheppler's description of the role of a state social studies supervisor, McPherson's Small Town Teacher, and Phillip Cusick's Inside High School: The Student's World. Some of these authors, such as Wolcott, have criticized their own work on the basis that they did not get inside the participants' heads and reveal them as total persons. Some do not provide a larger structure

with which data can be evaluated. I would question whether it is the role of the educational researcher to reveal the participants in an educational setting as "whole people." Rather I see the challenge of the qualitative researcher as that of presenting the "whole world" in the educational setting in such a way that the reader "goes away with a deep understanding of what it is to be" a teacher (student, principal, counselor, curriculum coordinator, etc.) in a particular setting or identified process.

Representing the world view of people in the group being studied is quite different than simple observational description or narrative. It is an attempt to get inside the participants' heads and describe what is going on in their categories, the way they put components of their world together, the pressures they perceive dictate how they function, the way they view their relationships, the people and roles which influence their behavior and responses in the educational setting, and their perception of their role in the particular social/educational context.

Research in social studies education which focuses on identification of the world view of classroom teachers, students, school administrators, local and state administrators could provide the framework for planned research and decisions about social studies curriculum, teaching strategies, curriculum development and inservice approaches, teacher and student needs in the classroom, perceptions of what the goals of social studies education should be, and other such issues.

The "emic" approach in qualitative research focusing on participants' definition of reality is certainly the best method for studying the process of change in education, changing needs of various participants, and identification of pressing problems to test further.

Let me give you an example of what I mean by presenting a few descriptions of the nature of social studies in one county. A county social studies coordinator recently described classes in social studies in the following way in a letter to the editor in a local newspaper:

> I am the Social Studies Coordinator and I have just completed a second round of visits to every single social studies classroom in our two high schools.... I have seen discussions, debates, lectures, intensively interested students, and motivating teachers. I have heard students discuss re-allocation of income, cultural diversity, and the nuclear arms freeze. I have seen and heard students debate and discuss productivity in a market economy, union contracts and what effect they have had over the years on our economy, and the global effect of human and material resources involved in international trade. I have heard articulate interesting students who could hold their own with the adult world..."

A teacher in that system said that the same social studies coordinator went around to teachers throughout the system prior to the television showing of the special on the holocaust last year to insure that they would not discuss or debate such a controversial issue in the classroom. A student in an "average" level civics class this year in that system said that they have not discussed any aspect or issue of the Presidential election. Instead, they "just watch whatever films come to the librarian and read stuff in the Civics book when there aren't any films. We don't ever talk about things that are going on; we just read, take notes, and watch movies."

One parent asserts that instruction is inadequate, students are bored, and that students are ignorant of current events and everyday problems and that they can't function in the real world. Another parent feels that students are getting all they need in social studies: "Social studies is just not that difficult. My daughter has a coach and I think he does a good job - teaching and coaching! Anybody can teach social studies and kids just have to watch the news to keep up on what is going on in the world."

The nature of social studies in that county and the reality of the process of relating social studies concepts and information to students would vary radically depending to who the researcher interviewed and what the researcher observed. The student sees the course as boring and unrelated to "things that are going on." One parent feels that social studies is not that difficult and what is being taught is sufficient. Another parent feels that her children are being short-changed because they are not receiving a proper education to enable them to function in the world. The social studies coordinator feels that the social studies curriculum and teaching methods are exemplary throughout the county. What is the reality?

Obviously the best method for a researcher to evaluate the nature of social studies in this county and propose suggestions for improvement is to design a carefully planned qualitative study consisting of a random schedule of observations across all classes/teachers/schools for the year; record events and interactions; interview parents, students, social studies chairpersons and coordinators, principals; review class

syllabi, film request sheets, student work and tests. Observations in faculty meetings, social studies inservice meetings, teachers' lounges, libraries, lunchrooms, playgrounds, and other formal and informal meetings and locations will provide insight into feelings about social studies and reasons behind decisions which are made. Memos, school newspapers, and local newspapers may provide insight into political forces shaping the social studies curriculum. Interviews with participants at all levels within the educational system and the community will provide various points of view in the language of the participants. From this body of data, a researcher could analyze the impact of the experience of having been involved in a social studies class on students in the system. The "truth" or "reality" will not be one whole; it will have multiple perspectives depending on the specific experiences and events. These data, however, can be analyzed to produce an understandable and coherent whole to allow the reader to know "what social studies is about" in the county and then to draw conclusions and accept or reject recommendations for improving curriculum and methods. The first question a qualitative researcher might ask in this situation might be "Will I get into a system to conduct an observational study when the coordinator projects such a perfect picture? If so, how?"

Data Reduction

The importance of analysis during data collection cannot be overemphasized. This is the procedure which enables the

qualitative researcher to identify and refine categories and ground theory. The first task of the ethnographer in this process is to carefully record what is observed and to note separately his/her reactions. Observations should maintain chronological sequence to assure that analysis reflects interaction of phenomena correctly. Then the ethnographer can begin to sort data into units for analysis, identifying like and unlike groups and comparing and contrasting them. At this point, categories begin to emerge from the data.

For example, recently a large county in a southern state banned the discussion of certain topics in public school classrooms. An ethnographer studying the effect of banning topics in the schools might start with the initiating memorandum outlining the plan. The meeting of the planning group, construction of the memo, implementation of the plan, support or not of the plan by county administrators and state officials are all "events" which should be recorded in chronological order. Participants at each stage and responses and interactions of participants should be recorded. The two topics prohibited (homosexuality and abortion) and the seven topics which must be approved prior to being discussed (evolution; abortion as a social, political or governmental issue; communism; religion; witchcraft and the supernatural; values clarification; and personal inquiries, or questions directed at students to reveal personal or family information) should be recorded. None of these are the categories of analysis, nowever. Categories which are beginning to emerge in the media are censorship, constitutional

rights, controversial subjects, teaching methods, critical thinking, protection of students, simple clarafication of existing policy, etc. The sources of these categories, their refinement, and their relationship to the plan and policy must be noted carefully to assure the correct associations and data analysis. The real effect of this plan can only be assessed by observation in classrooms throughout the county to determine whether topics are being avoided and how this is enabling or prohibiting students from being informed citizens (if that is, in fact, the purpose of education in that county). As observations continue, new categories for analysis will emerge and some old ones might be discarded or combined with new ones. A carefully planned analysis as this would in no way result in "unstructured, undisciplined, or unsystematic" analysis.

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) provide an indepth discussion of five general analytic procedures: analytic induction, constant comparison, typological analysis, enumeration, and standardized observational protocols. The first two are the most purely ethnographic in that they allow for reflection of the world view of the participants, emergence of categories from data, and constant data analysis during collection which would affect collection as it is done. The last three impose some external theoretical construct or protocol into which data are perceived, grouped and analyzed.

Miles and Huberman (1984) present numerous practical methods for collecting, storing, coding, sorting, retrieving and analyzing data. None of these methods prohibits constant

comparison or continuous analysis of data during collection, but the ethnographer should be very cautious not to get locked into one way of perceiving events or interactions just because it was proposed early in the study and is "legetimized" on a coding chart or data retrieval system. The authors caution repeatedly that "...narrative text alone is an extremely weak and cumbersome form of display." (p. 79) Again, the competent ethnographer must keep in mind the richness and value of the narrative and should draw on it when appropriate to support analysis in the final research report. Yes, in some cases it can "...spread out over many pages and it is hard to look at; it is sequential rather than simultaneous, making it difficult to look at two or three variables at once, it is usually only vaguely ordered; and it can get monotonous and overloading." (p. 79). But it is the critical stuff from which the guts of the ethnography emerges. Focusing on data in coding sheets alone might mask the basis of the underlying structure or broader implications of the study.

Event Analysis

As described in the previous section, there are numerous suggestions in the qualitative literature for methods of data reduction and analysis. Each strategy is practical and has both strengths and weaknesses. Methodology and categorization of data do not make an ethnography, however. The most essential step in good qualitative research is the analysis. Otherwise, what is represented is merely a narrative or groups of

categorized events. The key to quality analysis is a perspective of diverse data as a whole.

What the ethnographer observes is events within structures. The events which are registered by the observer are inseparable from the mode of registration. That is, an event might be identified by sight, sound, document, oral communication or even as a theory. The event is external to the researcher, but the shape of the description of the event is controlled by the observer. Unlike the quantitative researcher, the ethnographer both lives and records the experience. The important events must be recognized, described, and recorded as accurately as possible and with conscious effort to reduce bias.

The researcher does not possess a continuous recording of successive instants during observation, but retains only selected aspects from time to time. This is the observable level where explanations of phenomena are in terms of the characteristics of the participants, their demography, their relative positions in social/educational systems, and so on. This is the content of the event which is not continuous over time. But something else is continuous over time; that is a repetitive, distinctive, structuring tendency which Edwin Ardener (1970: 155) calls the "template." This is the deeper structure which is not directly observable but which is revealed by the observed stream of events.

This template is not a structure which the researcher takes to the site for the purpose of explaining phenomena as a

neo-Marxist might use class and economic struggle to explain all events and interactions in all situations. Rather the template is an emerging of a structure from the categories which represent the narrative data. Thus, the structure, as well as the categories, reflect the world view of the participants.

Let me give you two examples in the literature where this is done. The first is a rather short piece of social history written by Carlo Cipolla. It is entitled, Faith, Reason, and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany. The "event" which is described is a public inquiry from July 20, 1631 to August 9, 1631 for the crime of a group of people destroying a stockade in the relatively insignificant, isolated village of Monte Lupo near Florence, Italy. This particular event was well documented, and gave insight into thinking of various groups of people in the hierarchies of different social institutions in the village, region, and state at that particular time.

The underlying structure which provides explanation for the smaller events and interactions described is the changing thought processes of the people of 17th century Europe. This was characterized by the conflict between public health officials and persons at various levels of the Catholic Church hierarchy. While some participants held a rationalistic point of view and others a religious point of view, they did not think of it in terms of an abstract conflict between reason and faith, yet these are the two major categories which emerge from the data and give rise to the underlying structure.

The narrative reveals conflict both across and within people. Persons maintaining a religious explanation for life felt that the plague was a punishment sent by God which could only be stopped with processions and similar ceremonies as masses. While even health officials shared the religious convictions of their time and thought sermons and processions might appease God and perhaps help to end the epidemic, through unscientific observation, they felt that large public assemblies of people increased incidence of the plague and so made policy against such. Direct conflict between church and state health officials resulted.

Because of scientific ignorance, some health office orders, such as that for the mass slaughter of dogs and cats in the belief that the coats of the animals harbored the plague-bearing miasma, were counter-productive. While health officials and clergy were continuously fighting over causation and potential solutions, neither suspected for a moment the role played by bacilli, rats, and fleas. Both parties thought along erroneous and yet clearly divergent lines. The difference between rational and religious explanations "was not the difference between truth and error, but between two kinds of error - one blindly rooted in ideology, the other derived from inadequate means of observation."

While the book is predominantly narrative, the author provides unexpected insights into the relationship between faith and reason in the thinking of 17th century Europeans by inserting analytic statements throughout. The analysis is not based on the conflicts between the Church and state, but rather

on the conflict of an expanding universe of knowledge and explanation for observable events and people's methods of accepting or dealing with it. The reader has a "feeling for what it was like" to live during the time when scientific explanation for phenomena began to replace religious explanation.

A second example is a dissertation entitled Japanese Overseas Children's American Schooling Experience: A Study of Cross-Cultural Transition by Jennifer Farkas. The purpose of her study was to discover, analyze and describe the nature of American schooling as experienced and perceived by 22 Japanese children attending a U.S. elementary school. Students were children of Japanese parents transferred to the U.S. to work for three years in a Honda plant. For that three years, students would attend public schools throughout the week and a special Japanese school on Saturdays. At the end of the three years, they would return to Japan to resume their studies and life there.

As a bilingual observer, Farkas was privy to information and comments clearly intended for the privacy of one language or the other. She crossed the two worlds and was therefore able to more clearly see the perspective or world view of both American and Japanese participants. She was a participant-observer in both school settings and recorded field notes, conducted interviews, administered parent questionnaires, and kept a research journal.

She used the constant comparative analytic procedure for data analysis. In the early phase of data collection informants frequently spoke of "anxiety," "fear," "frustration about inability to communicate," and "isolation resulting from the

language barrier." Thus, two categories Farkas identified early in the study were labeled "fear" and "language barrier." Categories were added, eliminated, and changed as the study progressed, but in all, 37 categories emerged which gave rise to major themes and patterns.

The task of analysis of massive amounts of data at the end of the data collection period was frustrating, seemed to have no clear focus, and appeared insurmountable initially. This is a very common response of qualitative researchers at this point in a study. Farkas began to view the numerous small events, important verbal interactions, parental concerns, etc., as a bulk of narrative representing the large "event" of the three year block of time inserted into the lives of these Japanese students. She recorded areas of impact this "interruption" would have on students returning to Japan as identified by both students and parents.

The underlying structure which emerged was cross-cultural transition, and major themes were alienation, marginality, accomodation, and transculturation. While this pattern was the basis of analysis, Farkas supported her assertions with narrative and three in-depth contrasting case studies representing the Japanese children's perceptions of their schooling experiences in America as opposed to their experiences in Japan.

The Audience

The final aspect of qualitative research I would like to address is the audience. First, in the area of educational

anthropology more than other areas of social anthropology, the participants are more likely to be a part of the reading audience. It is difficult to be both anthropologist and trusted friend in the field, yet to get the world view of the participants the anthropologist must gain their trust. A very difficult task in reporting the analysis of educational data subsequent to an extended participant-observation period in a school setting is not to betray the trust of any participant which might negatively impact on his/her position, yet to present an accurate representation of the phenomena under study. A method used to disguise individuals is to merge data from multiple sources within the same social level (ie., teacher, student, parent, curriculum coordinator) to present the most common world view of that body of participants. When negative cases (exceptions to the emergent rule) are presented, specific persons are often identified (although frequently erroneously) by readers from the research setting.

To insure that data accurately reflect the world view of participants, go back into the research setting subsequent to analysis and ask key informants to review and confirm categories and underlying structures. This will provide support that for that time and that specific phenomenon being investigated, data observed, recorded and categorized are accurate. Subsequent studies in the same site might not reflect the same thing. Social settings, interactions, and roles are not stagnant.

Again, anthropological ethnographies provide examples of what can occur when researchers expect to exactly replicate

results of a study. The highly publicized discrepancy between two ethnographer's studies of the same Mexican village of Tepoztlan by Robert Redfield in 1930 and Oscar Lewis in 1951 is a consequence of the differences in their research designs and focus. Redfield and Lewis addressed different issues, used different methods and time periods, and elicited responses from different segments of the population. Their studies were conducted from different, unexplicated world views and scientific assumptions. The problem was aggravated by each representing results as the belief system and social structure of the village as a whole rather than as derived from the discrete units actually investigated. This is a potential problem when the ethnographer uses the method of merging data from multiple data sources to represent a whole and then not identifying the whole accurately.

A more current example of the same type is Derek Freeman's attack on Margaret Mead's work in Samoa. Again, Freeman's attacks on Mead's work come from observations he made 15 years later on a Samoan island nearly 200 miles away from the island where Mead had worked. Although he questions Mead's methodology, his own has been called into question by such noted ethnographers as Colin Turnbull. Margaret Mead is certainly not the only ethnographer to see things through the eyes of her selected informants. More striking than this attack to me is that some of the residents from the area studied by Mead have questioned the accuracy of her representations and analysis of their social system. I don't want to debate the issues in these two studies here, but for our purposes, you can see that the problem

is having two different ethnographers, working in totally different areas, using different methodologies, expecting to produce similar, if not identical results. Additionally, the researchers did not obtain confirmations of observations, categories, and analysis from participants.

In educational ethnography, we cannot expect findings to be replicated by another observer at another time in the same school. Also, the findings are not generalizable across systems or regions. The value in case studies or ethnographies identifying educational concerns and problems is the comparison of findings across sites and time on the same phenomena to determine the similarities in underlying explanatory structure. From this type of analysis, major changes in education can be suggested and tested.

Conclusions

As educational researchers, we need to examine the whole context of educational problems. We need to use methods which would provide a holistic way to evaluate problems in education and include all factors and perspectives of participants impinging on those areas. We need to carefully describe both positive and negative situations and then conduct comparative analyses of the resulting ethnographies and case studies to determine what factors seem to make the differences between them. It is at this point that reasonable hypotheses generated from the data can be proposed and tested to improve educational practices.

While qualitative methods provide a means to do this, we must be careful as educational ethnographers to collect

data which reflect the world view of all levels of participants, constantly compare and contrast events in data to derive categories for analysis, identify the larger underlying structures to explain the phenomenon being studied, be careful to define the "whole" correctly using data from one perspective, and build components into the research design which would allow for participant critique of final categories and structures.

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